



The President's Daily Brief

27 April 1973

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

27 April 1973

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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[redacted] Soviets [redacted]
[redacted]

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[redacted]

[redacted]

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In the Middle East, Moscow seems to be encouraging the Arabs to believe that the US played a key role in Israel's recent raid in Beirut. (Page 4)

France [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted] (Page 5)

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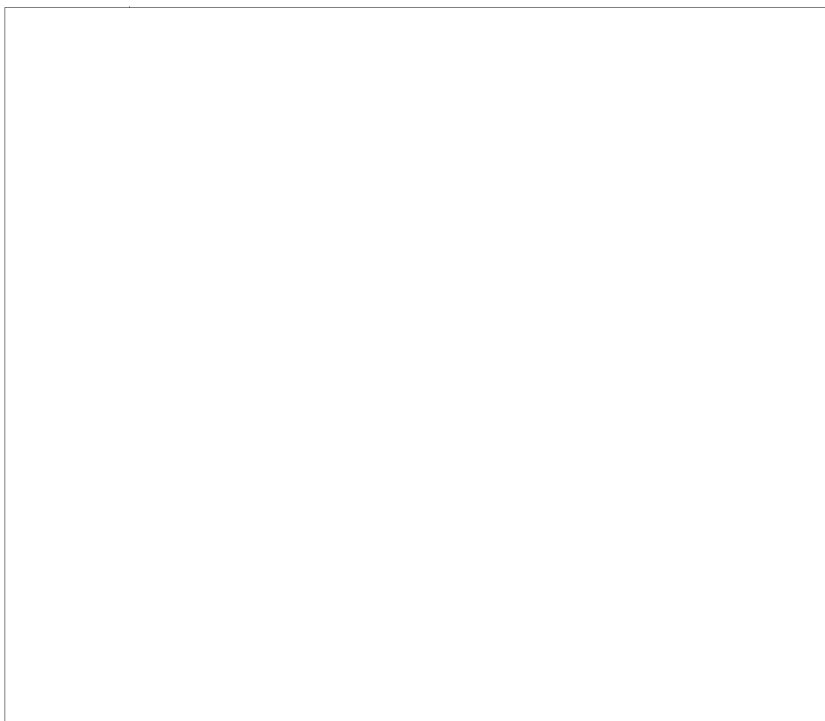
In Cambodia, Sirik Matak is already having problems with President Lon Nol over the powers of the new high council. (Page 6)

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USSR

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USSR

The Soviets are moving ahead with their new D-class submarine that carries 12 SS-NX-8 missiles with a range of up to 4,300 nautical miles.

--Earlier this month one of the two such submarines launched last year was sighted in the Barents Sea, some 55 miles from its base on the Kola Gulf.

--A third D-class recently was launched from the Severodvinsk shipyard on the White Sea.

--Eight more apparently are under construction at Severodvinsk, and some hull sections for another two

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--The Komsomolsk shipyard in the Far East is also producing the D-class.

When the construction program hits full stride, the two shipyards together probably will turn out seven D-class submarines annually. The one seen in the Barents Sea may soon fire its missiles in crew-training exercises, and could go on operational patrol before the end of the year.

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USSR

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USSR - MIDDLE EAST

The Soviets apparently are encouraging the Arab world to believe that the US played a role in Israel's raid in Beirut earlier this month.



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it. Soviet diplomats in Amman spread the same story to their Arab counterparts, [redacted]

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[redacted] Pro-Soviet papers in Beirut are giving extensive coverage to allegations of US participation in the raid, and Moscow radio broadcasts to the Middle East and Africa have repeated the stories.

In Moscow the press has replayed Palestinian charges of US complicity in the raid, but the tone has been more moderate. Soviet commentaries have not passed judgment on the accuracy of the accusations, and Izvestia printed the US denial. The USSR also has not issued an official statement condemning the Israeli action as it did after the Israeli raids against Syria and Lebanon last September.

The Soviets still regard Palestinian terrorism as counterproductive and dangerous, but could not pass up this opportunity to blacken the US image in the Arab world.

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FRANCE

The French continue to deny that Mirage aircraft sold to Libya have been turned over to Egypt and maintain that Israel has not provided proof of the transfer.

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The French policy dilemma is genuine. France has repeatedly stated, both publicly and privately, that if Libya violates the terms of its contract prohibiting transfer of the Mirages to a third country, delivery of the remaining aircraft--between 40 and 50--and spare parts would be discontinued.

France stands to lose money not only for the remaining Mirages and equipment but also for other arms purchases in which Libya has indicated an interest. This potential market is a key consideration at a time when Paris is concerned over declining arms sales.

Although Libyan oil supplies to France are not critical at this juncture, the approximately 15 percent of French crude oil needs which Libya now provides could grow in importance in view of the increasing tightness of fuel supplies worldwide.

Paris wants to limit Soviet influence in the Arab world and therefore values Qadhafi's vocal anti-communism. France's interest in extending and deepening its own influence throughout the Mediterranean also underscores its desire for good relations with Libya.

Pressure on France to make some further statement on the Mirages is likely to increase. Israel will continue to keep the heat on France, and members of opposition centrist groups in the French parliament have now taken up the issue.

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NOTES

Cambodia: Sirik Matak is already having problems with President Lon Nol over the powers of the new four-man high council. [redacted]

[redacted] Lon Nol does not accept Matak's position that all major executive decisions should be taken in council. Matak refuses to accept any reduction in the council's authority and believes he is supported by his two colleagues--In Tam and Cheng Heng. Matak declined to predict whether Lon Nol would capitulate. Even so, he believes it will take several days to resolve the problem, and the selection of a new cabinet will be correspondingly delayed.

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Venezuela-Cuba: A high Foreign Ministry official privately says that contacts with Cuba are continuing. He has confirmed to the US Embassy that three high-ranking Cuban trade officials are currently in Caracas to explore commercial opportunities. The official implies that if suitable arrangements can be worked out, Venezuela will sell oil to Cuba directly rather than continue the expedient of filling Soviet tankers returning to Europe from Cuba. He says that Venezuela will delay recognition of Cuba pending further discussions in the OAS, but hopes to raise the question again this summer in the Permanent Council.

Kuwait-Iraq: Kuwaiti forces returned yesterday to the border post that Iraq had occupied since late March. Tension is still being generated, however, by several long-standing problems. These are the disputed border, Iraq's occupation of Kuwaiti-claimed territory south of Umm Qasr, and Baghdad's claim to Kuwait's offshore islands.

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